

Link2home commences 1 July

New statewide information and referral service

The Going Home Staying Home (GHS) Reform aims to make it easier for people to access homelessness services. A key way of achieving this is the establishment of a statewide information and referral service, called **Link2home**.

Link2home is a single, statewide telephone service for enquiries about homelessness in NSW. It brings together several homelessness telephone services including HPIC, and the After Hours Temporary Accommodation (TA) line.

The Link2home service starts on 1 July 2014 and will be delivered by the FACS Housing Contact Centre. The telephone number is **1800 152 152**.

Providers of specialist homelessness services (SHS) and Link2home staff will work together to provide a response that is best suited to the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Link2home staff will contact SHS providers on behalf of people who need help to find out what accommodation and support services are available.

Link2home will:

- provide information about local services
- assess what kind of help people need
- refer people to appropriate specialist homelessness services, support services, temporary accommodation and other services.

Link2home will also provide information about homelessness services across NSW to SHS providers and homelessness advocates acting on behalf of clients.

Hours of operation

From 1 July, people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness can call Link2home 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year.

From 9am to 10pm daily, Link2home will provide callers with information, assessments and referrals to homelessness support and accommodation services across NSW.

Between the hours of 10pm and 9am, Link2home will provide information and assessment only and will refer to emergency services if required. Referral to accommodation and support services will not be possible during this time.

How Link2home works

For people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless needing help

From 1 July, callers to Link2home can receive

- an assessment of their needs
- a referral to a specialist homelessness accommodation and/or support service

- referral to temporary accommodation
- referral to mainstream support services and housing providers

For providers of specialist homelessness services

Link2home will also support specialist homelessness services in their assessment and intake under the no wrong door approach. SHS providers are required at the initial point of contact with an individual or family to conduct an assessment, provide information and referrals.

SHS providers must make every effort to find a response for the individual or family. This response may be the provider's own service, another SHS or a non-SHS response.

In cases where a provider has made every effort to find a suitable immediate accommodation response, SHS providers should call Link2home to refer the client to TA.

A new vacancy management system (VMS) for SHS providers and Link2home will be introduced from 30 June, 2014. The VMS will rely on SHS providers ensuring their vacancy information is up-to-date at all times.

More information on the VMS will be available before 30 June, 2014.

Transitioning from Homeless Persons Information Centre (HPIC) and Yconnect to Link2home

HPIC will cease services from 30 June, 2014. From 1 July, 2014 calls to HPIC will be automatically diverted to Link2home.

The Yconnect service ends on 13 July, 2014. Callers on this day will hear a message with the new Link2home phone number.

From July 14, 2014 onwards calls to Yconnect will be automatically diverted to Link2home.

Link2home promotion

Link2home will be introduced gradually, with promotion building over time to ensure the service is able to provide and maintain high standards of caller response at all times. In July, 2014 SHS and other key community and Government service agencies will receive Link2home wallet cards with the Link2home 1800 number to distribute to people who may be at risk of homelessness.